

Continuing Care Standards

Alberta

Update – April 2007

About the Standards

- Alberta's Continuing Care Standards include health service standards (administered by Alberta Health and Wellness) and accommodation standards (administered by Alberta Seniors and Community Supports).
- The accommodation standards apply to all long-term care and supportive living facilities. They include:
 - maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for residents,
 - nutritious meals that meet *Canada's Food Guide*,
 - routine cleaning and housekeeping of resident rooms and common areas, and
 - mandatory criminal record checks for new employees and volunteers.
- The health service standards apply to all publicly-funded health care services in home care, supportive living and long-term care. They include:
 - addressing the needs of clients through standardized assessments, care planning, and care coordination,
 - a shift to a client centered model of care including the active involvement of the resident/client and family in an individual's assessment and care planning,
 - recognition of wellness initiatives that focus on maintaining and improving the health of clients, and
 - a focus on quality improvement at both the care level and the operational level.
- The standards were first introduced in May 2006. The past year was dedicated to implementing the standards which gave service providers time to make changes and allowed government to deliver training on the standards.
- As a result of working with stakeholders on implementing the standards, both the health service and accommodation standards have been updated.

Monitoring and Enforcement

Health Service Standards

- The regional health authorities are required to adhere to and have all their contracted operators/agencies adhere to the health service standards. They are also required to have processes in place to ensure all their publicly funded continuing care health services are adhering to the health service standards.
- Alberta Health and Wellness has a compliance unit. The role and resources of the unit are being expanded so they can monitor compliance with the Continuing Care Health Service Standards.

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Long-Term Care Accommodation Standards

- Regional health authorities are required to adhere to and to have all their contracted long-term care operators adhere to the long-term care accommodation standards.
- Alberta Seniors and Community Supports will work with regional health authorities to monitor compliance with the long-term care accommodation standards.

Supportive Living Accommodation Standards

- Inspectors from Alberta Seniors and Community Supports will visit supportive living facilities to assess their compliance with the supportive living accommodation standards.
- Facilities who meet all of the standards will be granted a license. Facilities who meet all of the critical standards but not all of the required standards are granted a conditional license, and Government will work with them to help meet all of the standards. In cases where facilities present an immediate danger to the safety of residents, Government will have the authority to close the doors.
- The first inspections will occur this April. Facilities will be inspected and licensed every year. Inspections and re-evaluations of existing licenses can be done at any time if significant concerns are identified.
- Work is currently underway to develop a process for publicly reporting inspection results.

Concerns Resolution

- All regional health authorities and their contracted long-term care facility operators or home care agencies are required to have a concerns resolution process. Contact information for all the regional health authorities can be found at www.health.gov.ab.ca/regions/RHA_map.html.
- The Health Facilities Review Committee may also investigate health and accommodation-related complaints in long-term care facilities.
- A new toll-free phone line at 1 (877) 384 8326 will help address Albertans' concerns about accommodation services in supportive living or long-term care facilities.
- Concerns about abuse or suspected abuse in all publicly-funded facilities should be directed to the Protection for Persons in Care toll-free reporting line at 1 (888) 357 9339. The *Protection for Persons in Care Act* makes it mandatory for people who believe abuse is occurring or has occurred to report it.
- If a resident is in immediate danger, local emergency services should be contacted.

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Delivery of Training

Health Service Standards

- Alberta Health and Wellness has been working with the regional health authorities to develop an in-depth training program on the health service standards. Each region is providing training to its staff and staff of contracted operators/agencies on the health service standards.
- The primary tool for educating staff on the health service standards is the continuing care desktop, which was developed by Alberta Health and Wellness and SEARCH Canada. The desktop is an Internet based tool that contains the health service standards, related best practices, and other learning tools.
- The desktop is user-friendly and available to continuing care staff. There are already about 1,900 registered users.
- Alberta Health and Wellness is providing workshops on the desktop and the standards to educator champions in the regional health authorities.
- Once they have received their training, the educator champions are training front-line continuing care staff on the desktop and the standards.
- Alberta Health and Wellness is providing funding to support staff training on the desktop and the standards.

Accommodation Standards

- Training to help supportive living and long-term care operators implement the accommodation standards is being conducted in nine communities across the province and will be completed by the end of April.
- Consultants are available to visit facilities and assist them in preparing for inspections or to help address specific issues.

Useful Links

- The continuing care standards and related information are available online:
 - Continuing care in Alberta: www.continuingcare.gov.ab.ca
 - Alberta Seniors and Community Supports: www.seniors.gov.ab.ca
 - Alberta Health and Wellness: www.health.gov.ab.ca

For More Information

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Communications
(780) 415 9950

Alberta Health and Wellness
Communications
(780) 427 7164